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CULTURAL RESOURCES INVESTIGATION OF ST FRIOLE ISLAND  
PRAIRIE DU CHIEN WISCONSIN(U) CORPS OF ENGINEERS ST  
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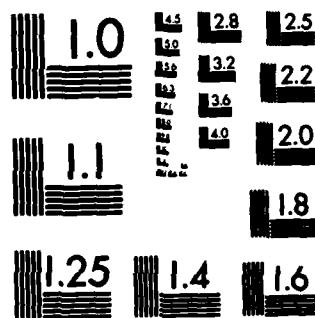
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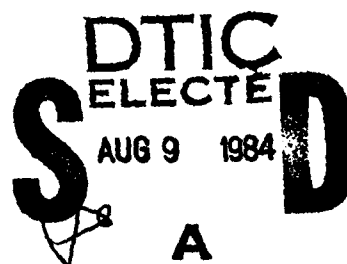


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CULTURAL RESOURCES INVESTIGATION  
OF ST. FRIOLE ISLAND  
PRAIRIE DU CHIEN, WISCONSIN

For the  
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS  
ST. PAUL DISTRICT  
under  
CONTRACT NO. DACW 37-82-M-2100



by  
LAURIE J. LUCKING  
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

FEBRUARY 1983

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## INTRODUCTION

This project was done under the auspices of the Department of the Army, Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District. It has been completed in accordance with contract number DACW37-82-M-2100 in partial fulfillment of the obligations of the Corps of Engineers regarding cultural resources as set forth in the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966; the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969; Executive Order 11593; the Archaeological and Historical Preservation Act of 1974; the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation "Regulations for the Protection of Historic and Cultural Properties"; the Department of the Interior guidelines concerning cultural properties; and the applicable Corps regulations.

The purpose of this project as stated in the scope of work was to:

"...provide the city of Prairie du Chien with a planning tool that will help it assess potential impacts to cultural resources from implementation of the St. Friole Island Reuse Plan.

The Contractor will prepare, from the data collected ... a series of overlays that show changing environmental and developmental conditions which may have impacted upon prehistoric and historic archaeological sites on St. Friole Island. These overlays must show the history of these changing conditions in such a manner that potential impacts from future development can be assessed."

The entire island of St. Friole has been determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

## METHODOLOGY

The research into the developmental history of the Prairie du Chien area, particularly that of the island of St. Friole, took the form of a record and literature search conducted at three different locations. In Madison, the prehistoric and historic site files for Prairie du Chien were examined at the State Historic Preservation Office. The Archives and Manuscripts Division of the State Historical Society contained many early maps and official and personal papers relating to the history of Prairie du Chien. All materials concerning Prairie du Chien were examined. The State Historical Society library contained a number of pamphlets and books on the project area. All this material was also read. Mr. William Green of the State Historic Preservation Office was very helpful in suggesting other written records and maps which were available outside of Madison.

In Prairie du Chien, two on-site inspections of the island of St. Friole were conducted to help put the written material into perspective. Conversations were also held with Dale Klemme of the Public Works Department to try to elucidate data referred to in the written sources or appearing on historic maps for which there did not seem to be a complete explanation elsewhere. The Register of Deeds' office contained a number of maps and atlases of historical importance and these were examined. The files and aerial photographs held at the City Assessor's Office helped immeasurably in the collection of data about 20th century Prairie du Chien.

In Milwaukee, the Local History Room at the Milwaukee Public Library contained most of the general histories of the Prairie du Chien area including Peter L. Scanlan's Prairie du Chien, French-British-



American. Also read were the previously completed reports done for the Corps of Engineers or the State Historical Society on the Prairie du Chien region. Among these were Hoagland and Frandsen (1978), Oerichbauer (1976), Zeitlin (1980), Stoltman et. al. (1982), and Halsey (1972). The City of Prairie du Chien Master Plan was also very useful.

No effort was made to interview local collectors in the Prairie du Chien area concerning the existence of archaeological resources. The reasons for this were threefold: (1) They had been interviewed extensively for previous reports; (2) There were local problems concerning the future of collecting on the island of St. Friole at the time this project was undertaken; and (3) It was felt it would be more useful to document the amount of disturbance which had occurred on the island before any further interviews took place.

Literature and map sources are contained in two separate bibliographies at the end of this report.

#### PROBLEMS WITH MAP PREPARATION

The chief stumbling block in a project of this type is that written sources concerning architecture and topography are only as good as their descriptions of ACCURATE locations, not quantity or identity. For example, Zebulon Pike's 1805 description of the island of St. Friole mentions the existence of 16 houses overlooking the east channel of the Mississippi River. This gives quantity (16) and identity (houses) but is useless as far as mapping the placement of these buildings. Descriptions of this sort are only good for checking the accuracy of maps. It was very difficult to determine the locations of non-descript properties which no longer exist. The only source for

this information was maps. The problem became particularly acute in dealing with the island in the twentieth century since many more recent maps do not depict all buildings. Aerial photographs were the most useful here. In dealing particularly with historic maps, there were problems of scale. This was resolved to the best of our ability by keying in to the known locations of lot boundaries and the presence of those few buildings it still exist or for which accurate locations are available. It was taken for granted that maps drawn from the late nineteenth century (c. 1876) onward were to scale. The mapping techniques were much improved and they contained scales which appeared to be accurate. In later maps, e.g. Map 6, buildings which did not necessarily coexist are shown on the same map. If this had not been done, it would have been necessary to draw a new map for every five year period to show the rapid changes in population growth and development due to the presence of the railroad. The outline of the island at periods of high and low water differ vastly. Maps from around 1930 actually show the island as part of the mainland. The outline of the island was therefore given only for what were felt to be periods of relatively high water. But it should be understood that in times of drought the island would only have been discernible from the mainland by a wet depression in the area of the Marais of St. Friole. Pool 10 was created in 1936 with the completion of Lock and Dam 10 and appears to have raised the water level considerably. The island never again appears attached to the mainland.

## USES AND LIMITATIONS

These maps primarily depict the changing topographic and architectural scene on the island of St. Friole for the past 160 years. Their function is to aid in determining how the changing landscape has affected the prehistoric and historic resources which would yield information about the Prairie du Chien region in the past and which could be incorporated into the St. Friole Re-Use Plan. The lack, to date, of a comprehensive archaeological survey made difficult the compilation of data for Map 3, but it is hoped the information contained on Maps 4-10 will aid in the structuring of any future surveys. The information on the disturbance caused by gravelling operations and the building of Highway 18 should be especially useful.

### MAP 1 - Original Contours and Soil

This map shows the relatively level landscape of the island and indicates the soil is composed of undifferentiated alluvium common to the islands in the Mississippi River. Early topographic maps clearly showed the presence of the Mendenhall Mound on the northern portion of the island. The map base is taken from an 1820 map by Lyons. Lateral erosion, gravelling operations and highway construction have changed the outline of the island. It is possible that the rate of alluvial deposition increased rapidly in the nineteenth century as a result of the impact of the vegetation clearing activities of an increasing mainland population. The information contained on this map was compiled

from a USGS topographic map, a 1929 Army Corps of Engineers survey map, Slota and Garvey (1961), and a 1968 "Soils of Wisconsin" map.

#### MAP 2 - Original Vegetation

This map shows a wide band of sedge wetland on the eastern, southern and northern sides of the island. This swampland appears on all the early 1800's maps and was therefore felt to be accurate. Trewartha (1940) includes the entire island in his river bottom woodland category so it was felt at least portions of the remainder of the island were covered by this vegetation community. The map is therefore a compromise. The St. Friole Re-Use Plan vegetation analysis shows river bottom woodland as the natural vegetation in those areas depicted as sedge wetland on Map 2 and designates the rest of the island as wetland.

#### MAP 3 - Prehistoric and Protohistoric American Indian Sites

This map depicts the known and alleged prehistoric and protohistoric American Indian sites on the island of St. Friole. The information depicted on this map was taken from Oerichbauer (1976), Halsey (1972), the site files of the State Historic Preservation Office, the St. Friole Island Re-Use Plan and an 1821 map of the borough of Prairie du Chien.

State site numbers are given where they have been assigned.

Explanations of site numbers are as follows:

Cr-131 Middle Woodland campsite in the gravel pit area.

- Cr-245 Putative burial on the bank of the Mississippi River.
- Cr-248 Cemetery north and east of the WPRE radio station.
- Cr-7 The mound which forms the base of the Villa Louis.
- Cr-29 The "Mendenhall" mound.
- Cr-57 A campsite/worksites in and around the remains of Old Ft. Crawford and also on the waterfront of the island.
- (After re-reading Brown and Oerichbauer, it is uncertain whether this number should apply to an area around Ft. Crawford. The most likely placement seems to be that seen on Map 3.)
- Cr-65 Mound behind the Brisbois House.
- Cr-160 A mound "just below old Ft. Crawford."
- Cr-167 A prehistoric component of unknown cultural affiliation revealed by test excavations around the Rolette House.
- Cr-246 Mounds either side of the Washington Street bridge.

The legal descriptions for these sites are given in Appendix C.

Sites without official site numbers are explained below:

1. Area where Old Copper projectile points were allegedly found (Oerichbauer 1976:15).
2. Grading operations in this area exposed a number of burials and occupational debris. This entire area may be included in Cr-248, it is unclear. Oerichbauer (1976:30) gave this a Middle Woodland designation and said some burials may be historic.

3. The pipe depicts the location of the Great council of 1825 according to the 1821 map. The location was given as the Prairie du Chien terrace in written sources (e.g. Scanlan).
4. Number given to a putative third mound which was located near the site of Ft. Crawford (Oerichbauer 1976:28).
5. Area where projectile points of unknown cultural affiliation were collected (Ibid.: 41).
- 6 and 7. Putative mounds reported by Oerichbauer (1976:31).
8. Mound shown on an 1821 map of the borough of Prairie du Chien.
9. Area where a number of projectile points of unknown cultural affiliation were collected. Reported in Oerichbauer (1976:4).
10. Burial near the old dockworks reported in Oerichbauer (1976:65).

#### MAP 4 - Early Fort Crawford - 1821

Map 4 was based on an anonymous 1821 map entitled "A Topographical View of the Site of Ft. Crawford Lat. 48N.". The map was not to scale and the orientation of the main enclosure and the two streets were incorrect. These items were corrected using written sources and later maps as guides. This is the earliest map depicting actual buildings that was found during research. Earlier oral accounts of the island gave numbers of buildings but no locations. Thomas Anderson (W.H.C. 1882:147) in 1800 counted between 10 and 15 houses made of logs,

bark and mud. Zebulon Pike in 1805 reported 18 houses overlooking the Mississippi River (Oerichbauer 1976:77). Schoolcraft reported 80 buildings "including the garrison" in 1820 and Major Long reported 20 dwelling houses in 1823 (Ibid.: 92). Many of the buildings which were standing prior to 1819 were reportedly destroyed or moved during the building of Ft. Crawford (Ibid.:82). Their original locations are unknown. Ft. Shelby was erected in 1813 and renamed Ft. McKay in 1814 upon its capture by the British. Thomas Anderson, who accompanied the British forces, noted that the houses at Prairie du Chien were now fenced in "with strong oak pickets, ten feet high" (W.H.C. 1882:195). Ft. Crawford was built on the site of Fort Shelby/McKay and was described as:

"...long log blockhouses with shed roofs sloping outward and arranged to enclose a space 340 feet square. The walls were covered at the northwest and southeast corners by square, two-story blockhouses, the upper story placed diagonally on the lower, thus presenting eight faces." (Gregory 1932: 168).

In 1820 the island was divided into main village lots. Buildings 1-4 were identified on the 1821 map. According to Hoagland and Frandsen (1978:15) the Michael Brisbois property was leased by the American Fur Company in 1822. It is unknown whether the building labelled '5' is the original Brisbois cabin. Oerichbauer (1976:94) says the American Fur Company operated out of a log cabin on either lot 16 or 17. Building 6 is the log jail built in 1821. It was 25 by 26 feet and was supposedly constructed on lot 17. The 1821 map showed the jail on lot 16. The road is in its correct position on Map 4, so the placement of the jail in relation to the road is in doubt. The hotel on lot 19 (No. 3) is identified as the Mann hotel in Hoagland and Frandsen (1978:19).

Hoagland and Frandsen also place Charles Lapointe's hotel and tavern, the Franklin House, on lot 20 prior to 1821. The lot was sold to Joseph Rolette in that year. This is the present site of McClure's tavern which is supposed to be the building which incorporates the cabin of Basil Giard. The State Historical Preservation Office files and Oerichbauer (1976:86) report Giard's cabin as presumed still existing. Dale Klemme, however, says evidence his office has compiled shows the tavern building burned and was rebuilt. The site of Ft. Crawford has been nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. The remainder of the buildings are unidentified.

#### MAP 5 - Early European Settlement, 1825-1830

Map 5 is based on an anonymous map from 1829 of the entire Prairie du Chien region. The main stockade around Ft. Crawford has disappeared as well as number of smaller stockades/fences around private dwellings. The new configuration of the stockades is confirmed by Lyons' 1828 map of private land claims, but Lyons shows only nine dwellings in addition to Ft. Crawford. None of the maps from 1825-1830 show the three streets that were laid out in 1821. None of the buildings are identified on the 1828 or 1829 maps. The building on lot 13 is still the Indian Agency House. Lot 14 according to Oerichbauer (1976:93) is still the U.S. Factory but Hoagland and Frandsen (1978:16) identify it as American Fur Company property. Lot 15 is still mortgaged to the American Fur Company but fewer buildings are shown than on Map 4. The log jail still exists, it did not burn down until 1834. The Mann Hotel on lot 19 was now owned by Jean Brunet who also ran a ferry from this



property. The remainder of the buildings are unidentified but according to Hoagland and Frandsen (1978:19-21) lot 16 was owned by Francis Bouthellier, the front portion of lot 17 by Jean Baptiste Pion, lot 18 by the American Fur Company, lots 20-22 by Joseph Rolette, lot 23 by Antoine Lachapelle, lot 24 by Francois Galorneau and Jacob Forsenot, and lot 25 by Joseph Crele.

The two cemeteries are reported in Oerichbauer (1976:84-85). Both appear to have been military cemeteries.

#### MAP 6 - Period of Prosperity, 1850-1880

Map 6 is based primarily upon two maps - an 1870 bird's eye view of Prairie du Chien and an 1876 plat map of the village showing the locations of rail lines and buildings. These maps were augmented by information contained in Hoagland and Frandsen (1978), Zeitlin (1980), and Oerichbauer (1976). All of the identifiable buildings from this period are shown on the map. The Brisbois home was built in 1839, the Astor Fur Trading Warehouse in 1835, the first Villa Louis in 1843 and the present structure in the 1870's, the Rolette home in 1840-1842, the Rolette warehouse in 1835, the pontoon bridge in 1874, and the Diamond Joe Warehouse, the grain elevator, the depot, the mill and the Dousman Hotel in 1864. Of these buildings, the Brisbois House, the Astor Fur Trading Warehouse, the Rolette house, the Villa Louis and its outbuildings, the depot and the Dousman Hotel have been nominated to or are on the National Register of Historic Places. A tavern which dates from around 1852 was located at Water and Bolvin.

The main village was platted in 1853 and a plat map from 1856 shows Jones, Mary, Cass, John and Point Streets south of Bridge Street. The bridge at Bridge Street (now Blackhawk Street) was built in 1857 (Hoagland and Frandsen 1978:11). The Bolvin/Washington Street bridge was washed away in 1859 and not totally reconstructed until 1890 (Zeitlin 1980:9) but it is included on Map 6. The railroad loop line for the pontoon bridge was constructed in the 1870's.

#### MAP 7 - Early Modern Period, 1900-1930

Map 7 is based solely on a number of maps and aerial photographs from that period. The base map is a Corps of Engineers survey map dated 1929-1930. This was augmented by information from three Sanborn fire maps from 1905, 1912, and 1924 plus a set of 1927 aerial photographs of the island of St. Friole provided by the Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District. All the buildings identified on Map 6 were still standing in this period but there had been a few changes. The Dousman Hotel was vacant by 1924. The Diamond Joe Warehouse continued to be used as a freight and storage depot but the grain elevator was closed by 1912. All other identifiable buildings are marked on the map. The racetrack was built at the turn of the century by a son of Hercule Dousman who was a horseracing enthusiast. According to the City Assessor's Office, all sewer lines and underground cables were laid in existing roadbeds.

#### MAP 8 - Destruction due to Graveling Operations, 1948

This very simple outline is based on a 1948 aerial photograph and shows the greatest extent of the destruction of the northern portion of the island due to the graveling operations. The present northern boundary of the island is composed primarily of fill material dredged up during the graveling.

#### MAP 9 - Modern Period, 1976

Map 9 is copied directly from a 1976 aerial photograph of the island of St. Friole. The northern portion of the island continues to be dominated by the graveling operation. On the eastern side of the island fill material has been used to build up Lawler Park. The land under the Highway 18 overpass is covered by 15 to 17 feet of fill material needed to level the ground surface. The area immediately to the north of the overpass has been dozed repeatedly and is now and has been used for the placement of large piles of salt and coal.

#### MAP 10 - Projected Base for Improvement

Map 10 is Map 9 minus the buildings already removed or scheduled to be removed as part of the St. Friole Island Re-Use Plan. This map shows the basic landscape upon which future improvements can be made.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The gravelling operation on the northern portion of the island would appear to have effectively destroyed or at least severely disturbed any prehistoric or historic sources that may have originally occurred here. The same may be said of the area under and immediately south and north of the Highway 18 overpass. The southern tip of the island appears to be relatively undisturbed and prehistoric materials have been reported for this area. The shoreline has changed drastically in the past 200 years, however, and lateral erosion and alluvial deposition may have altered or rendered unreachable any undisturbed prehistoric component. Except for the placement of the racetrack, the large undeveloped area east of the Villa Louis property appears to have been undisturbed and would probably be worth surveying for prehistoric materials. Because of the high nature of the island's water table, no subsurface excavation (basements, cellars) occurred in the developed central area so it is relatively undisturbed. Now that most of the properties have been removed, this area would definitely rate an archaeological survey before future development took place.

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## APPENDIX A

## APPENDIX B

## RESUME

**PERSONAL:** Laurie Lucking  
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**EDUCATION:** Ph.D. Candidate 1980. University of Minnesota.  
Major: Anthropology with strong emphasis in Archaeology.  
Minor: Botany/Ecology.

Master of Arts 1973. University of Minnesota.

Bachelor of Arts 1971. Moorhead State University.  
Major: History. Minor: Anthropology.

**WORK EXPERIENCE:** September 1979 to present. President, Cultural Impact Analysis, Inc. Administration of Cultural Resource mitigation contracts.

January 1979 to August 1980. Part time. Assistant Archaeologist with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District.

1978 June through August. Field director - cultural resource inventory of the shoreline of Lake Pokegama, Itasca County, Minnesota.

1978 April through May. Contracted by the Science Museum of Minnesota to: 1) Prepare a working paper on the general cultural themes of Melanesia; 2) Identify and appraise the Melanesian artifacts held in the Museum's collections; and 3) Compile a film list and annotated bibliography of works concerned with the anthropology of Melanesia.

1977 February through July. Archaeologist with the Otter Tail County Engineer's Office. Responsible for a site survey of the county and a written report on the county's prehistory. Assistant field director of the Dead River Salvage Project at Otter Tail Lake.

1974-1976. Palaeoethnobotanist on the Wahgi Valley Archaeological Project, Papua New Guinea, under the auspices of the Australian National University.

1973 October through December. Field director - excavations at the Kuk Site, Wahgi Valley Archaeological Project, Papua New Guinea.

OTHER  
WORK  
EXPERIENCE:

- 1970 Summer. Field school at the University of the Americas, Cholula, Puebla, Mexico.
- 1972 Summer. Field school at Mille Lacs Lake, Minnesota.
- 1971-1972. Teaching assistant. Department of Anthropology. University of Minnesota - Minneapolis.
- 1972-1973. Research assistant. Department of Anthropology. University of Minnesota.
- 1978-1979. Teaching Assistant. Department of Anthropology. University of Minnesota.

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## APPENDIX C

## APPENDIX C

Cr-131 N 1/2, SW 1/4 section 24

Cr-245 W 1/2, SW 1/4 , SW 1/4 section 24

Cr-248 S 1/2, S 1/2, SW 1/4 section 24 and  
N 1/2, N 1/2, NW 1/4 section 25

Cr-7 NE 1/4, SW 1/4, NW 1/4 section 25

Cr-29 NW 1/4, NW 1/4, NW 1/4 section 25

Cr-57 W 1/2, E 1/2, SE 1/4, NW 1/4 section 25

Cr-65 SW 1/4, NW 1/4 section 25

Cr-160 SW 1/4, NW 1/4 section 25

Cr-167 SE 1/4, SW 1/4, SW 1/4, NW 1/4 section 25

Cr-246 NE 1/4, SE 1/4, NW 1/4 section 25

